

SPEECH BY COMMANDER FIDEL CASTRO RUZ, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE UNITED PARTY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND PRIME MINISTER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN THE MEMORIAL CEREMONY OF NOVEMBER 27, HELD AT THE GRANDSTAND OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAVANA, ON NOVEMBER 27, 1963.

(STENOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT)

Students:

Days ago, while on an almost customary visit, when opportunities allow us, at the University of Havana, I thought, while talking with a group of students, that this November the 27th it would be good opportunity to address from this university grandstand a number of issues much of our interest, the interest of our country, the interest of our economy, and that interest you.

Then occurred a series of events, or rather an international event of great importance and, above all, very revealing of the state of decomposition of the imperialist society, which was brought to the attention of our people, our country. It requires analysis and we will give due attention to this event.

Subsequently —precisely yesterday— for other reasons we had a meeting with high school students. On that occasion, some of the issues that we had planned to deal with here today were brought before those students. By this I want to tell you that it was presented on November the 27th not with the characteristics that we would have wished, i.e., without other problems that were not our purely technical problems, students, academics and also without a partly treated subject.

So I think, I feel that in no way will I be very content, because I thought this would be the day to discuss a number of issues that have to do with technical issues, with the economy, with education, with many things (APPLAUSE). But of other issues we must say something anyway, that is, of the issues that we would have liked not to mention in here.

I will refer as briefly as possible, just a reference to the issues related to the assassination of the US president. About how the events that have been occurring are gradually exposing the whole maneuver, all the dirty, unprincipled backroom dealing behind that episode; the plot against peace, a sinister conspiracy that is increasingly shaping up more in the imagination of those responsible for that event.

Every day the world public opinion receives more and more evidence that lays bare, completely unmask the maneuver that was hatched against the world, and — very especially — also against our country; apart from a number of strange things that every day become more strange and that make their version of events weaker every day, the fabrications, insinuations they wanted to create following the death of Kennedy; all of the facts which the world has been thinking about, which everyone has been thinking about -- and the more you think about them, the less explanations we find.

Today, for example, a shooting champion who one can say is a shooting specialist, an Olympic shooting champion—I think his name is Hubert Hammerer— said in Vienna that it is unlikely that a shooter equipped with a repeating rifle with scope can hit a target three times in the space of five seconds, when shooting at a target that moves at a distance of 180 meters, at a speed 15 kilometers per hour. A number of details thus are beginning to emerge.

When we were reading this newswire we remembered some experiences with these issues, especially in matters of rifles with scopes. When we landed in Cuba we had fifty rifles with telescopic sights and we had prepared them very well. We had done many practices with those rifles. We knew perfectly all the

characteristics of that type of rifle, because they all have different properties. And one of the difficulties of telescopic sight rifles is that once you shoot on a target, the target is lost as a result of the shot, just by the effect of shooting, and it is necessary to find it again quickly, even as you have to pull the bolt again. Though at first it was said that an automatic rifle did it, they then started saying that it was not automatic or semiautomatic but a bolt-action rifle, and with that kind of weapon it is really very difficult to make three consecutive shots; but, above all, it is difficult to hit the target, almost impossible.

We might remember certain shooting competitions known in different countries. For example, in Mexico there is a shooting event for hobbyists performed on a lamb they release at one spot and it runs between the hills — I think it makes a journey of about 200 meters — and while it runs this route, shooters are allowed to fire three shots at it. The best shooters, having enough time, and in absolute calm, as the animal travels 200 meters can rarely get to hit twice on target; it's very difficult, and it is exceptional that they can hit it three times, and this is when having a lot of time and being absolutely calm, and very quiet. And usually this was not with telescopic sight rifles, but rifles that had what is called a Lyman sight, which is the one on American Garand rifles have -- where there is a tiny circle in the sight, in whose center the target is located.

When shooting quickly it is much better to do it with the Lyman sight than with a telescopic sight, because with it the target is not lost from view. The news spoke of a rifle scope of between 4x to 18x magnification, i.e., a rifle that gets too close to the target. And the more magnification the sight has, the more sensitive it is to any movement and the target gets lost.

There are other circumstances which suggest that this rifle may have appeared as part of the plot. That the gun found was put in place as part of a ruse. This gun which is not exactly a gun to shoot from 80 meters, nor to fire three shots— a telescoping sight is a weapon used to shoot from 300, 400, 500, 600 meters, and more. Some of the fellows who arrived on the "Granma", many used a white dish as a target from 600 meters with a securely seated rifle, and not shooting repeatedly. That's how a sniper shoots from a distance. It's really strange that whoever was going to make an attempt at 80 meters, from a window, would acquire a rifle with a scope, when a weapon without a telescopic sight would be much more appropriate for making a shot at that distance. That's one of the strange circumstances which people are beginning to see.

Another thing that struck me is that the rifle was bought through the mail for \$12.28 or \$12.78, or something like that, that is, it was bought for \$12; and good scope like was on the rifle alone is worth the \$12 and more. In what part of the world can someone buy high-powered rifles with telescopic sights by catalog or for \$12.78 or \$12.28? We bought a few of these rifles and we know what they are worth, we had the need to buy many scopes and we know what scopes cost. That was another strange fact.

All of these really weird things are beginning to add up. It is assumed that the individual wants a rifle with telescopic sight to be able to shoot his target safely from a distance, and to ensure a shot against a fixed target, not against a moving target, because when shooting on a moving target the telescopic sight becomes a hindrance. So this gun that was chosen would be one used in the hopes of making a precise shot from a safe distance. But in this case, by shooting at a moving target just 80 meters away, he wasn't ensured a precise shot, nor even safety for himself.

It is very strange, and what it really shows is that this was not the work of a fanatic. These things always have to be based on opinions, assumptions -- but this would probably be the first example in

history of a fanatic using a telescopic sight. The first time in history. Fanatics have used revolvers, pistols, and hand grenades but never a telescopic sight. In addition, generally, a fanatic wouldn't shoot from a fifth floor window. Also, generally, fanatics immediately confess and explain their reasoning. It is the psychological reaction of the fanatic.

But here we see the strange case of the alleged murderer shooting from the place where he works. This is not the act of an individual who intends to get away with it—that is, not a fanatic, but somebody who was hired to do the job. No one trying to get away with such an act would perform the attack from the site itself where he works, where he's going to be identified just in five minutes, where within five minutes he will be fiercely persecuted everywhere. He would have gone to the roof of another building, he would have rented an apartment along the path, he would have placed himself with his telescopic rifle at a distance that would have allowed him to escape. It is very strange that an individual --- where he works, where he will be identified within five minutes --- would carry out an act like that from there and then, at the same time, try to escape. That makes no sense, no sense. A series of strange circumstances indeed.

To use that type of rifle from there and then try to escape knowing that he would have been immediately identified --- all these are contradictory, illogical and unexplainable things. Things that show a guilty person was either set in place to be there, or that a guilty person was created out of thin air. Because only two things fit these circumstances: either this individual is not guilty and was framed by the police, or this individual is the one who did the shooting, but then all of his actions have no logical explanation and would have no logical explanation if he was the individual who committed the murder, who thought about escaping, but at the same time is easily identified as the perpetrator. And that can have only one meaning: an individual perfectly prepared for committing that act, with the promise of escaping, to whom were assigned a number of activities and previous steps to commit or not commit, but to drop the responsibility or hint at one those whom the authors were very interested in carrying so much responsibility.

After our hearing we have obtained new data: information from the newspaper "Excelsior" from Mexico, that this man had visited the Consulate of Cuba and the Soviet Union to obtain a transit visa to Cuba and the Soviet Union. Immediately we inquire with our consular officers. The newspaper's version is very objective; it explained how the individual had left in disgust, slamming the door, because they had not issued him a visa.

We requested for information and found it was true that in September the 27th he had shown up at our Consulate in Mexico, had requested a visa, had been explained that the consulate couldn't issue that visa without authorization from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, in turn, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not grant such transit visas if the country of destination did not grant them. In addition, in our consular offices many visa applications are requested, and usually our officials are very cautious, very conservative in that sense. Because we have to assume that the enemy is constantly trying to send agents here, and so many measures are taken. We just don't grant a visa to anyone who requests it; we have to perfectly know their background. Therefore, the official denied him a visa.

Now, on the next day, Saturday night, barely 24 hours after the Kennedy's death, agents of the Federal Police of Mexico arrested the employee of our consulate—which has Mexican citizenship—and also her husband. What for and why was she arrested? She was arrested for questioning and interrogating her in a brutal manner, mistreating, insinuating alleged links with the Kennedy's accused murderer, trying to get some information through coercion.

We didn't know that, I ignored that when I spoke— I have understood that Saturday night. But this shows how everything is shaping up.

Police officers that interrogated her alleged to be investigating the visit this man Oswald had made to the Consulate of Cuba. How did they know? Who told them? How did they find out? Because we didn't even know, because it was a routine matter. No one at the Foreign Ministry, no officer had even identified that individual who appeared as the alleged perpetrator, as one among —hundreds of individuals— who had showed up to request a visa. Then, the American police knew. Then Dallas police informed it. Why did they know it? Why did they inform it? Why hadn't that been published in the newspapers yet, and how come it was published in a Mexican newspaper two or three days later?

Here you can clearly see the thread. What was this man doing at the Consulate of Cuba in Mexico? What excuse did he use? To apply for a transit visa when traveling to the Soviet Union he could have gone to England, it was closer and had more facilities, or through France, or through so many countries in Europe? Why did he request this in Mexico to take a longer trip requesting a transit visa to the Soviet Union, passing through Cuba?

Assuming that this man had been the real murderer, it would be clear that the masterminds behind the assassination were carefully preparing an alibi. They sent this individual to apply for a visa from Cuba, imagine that! Just imagine that it turns out that Mr. Kennedy was killed by an individual whose identity was known, where he worked, who had been in the Soviet Union, and that the US President was killed by that man coming back from the Soviet Union, passing through Cuba. It was the perfect alibi. All the ideal conditions to get in the head of the American public the suspicion that he had been a communist, or an agent— as they would call him— of Cuba and the Soviet Union.

It is very strange that no one who had been in the Soviet Union—and when he was there for the first time didn't go through Cuba— if they had easily given him passport, if he had the resources to go to Mexico, why would he have to come to Cuba but with the sole and exclusive purpose of leaving a trace, developing a plot? Why is he angry when told that they can't issue him a visa? Why does he kick the door, why does he leave? No friend of Cuba, no communist would do that when visiting our consulates. No one behaves in that rude way.

Of course, we have no other history of this defendant. We have no other background about him than that which has been announced in the press. We would never affirm categorically that someone is guilty of something if we don't have irrefutable evidence of this; but based on assumptions, if this was the true material author of this act, his trip to Mexico, his alleged interview by reporters posing as defender of Cuba shortly before the incident, his alleged meddling with counterrevolutionaries there, in all that the alibi would be perfectly crafted.

Then everything is perfectly explainable in someone who was offered to escape, and he fired, left traces, identified himself, and disappeared. They would say he came to Cuba, that Cuba sheltered him. Perhaps the accomplices themselves would make him disappear later; but they would make believe that he had come to Cuba, that he had been in Cuba before the murder, because it looks as if he had been the culprit he would have tried to escape. Then they arrest him and he smiles at the cameras, does not confess, denies everything, doesn't agree to go through the lie detector. And, gentlemen, the unusual, the incredible, what comes to give strength to the suspicion that already everyone has today: after just

36 hours, 48 hours to be exact, in the basement of a prison, surrounded by police officers, he is murdered. He never again speaks a single word.

Who? Why? A gangster, a gambler, owner of a night entertainment center, with nudism and all, with a history of violence, and he manages to stand in front of the alleged murderer. An individual known to the entire police with whom he was, some sort of a gambler, as an owner of immoral entertainment centers, a guy with a history, known by the police itself, how could the police confuse him with a journalist, a reporter where all those cops knew him perfectly? How can that guy be there impersonating a journalist and calmly shoot?

What does he claim later: the most ridiculous, the most absurd. This gambler, this vicious, this gangster of known background says he did it to prevent the President's widow flying back to Dallas to return to the trial.

It was very difficult to make anyone conceive that an act of this nature would have taken place for revenge. For vengeance on the culprit — if he were the real culprit — when the electric chair was waiting for him? How to conceive that anyone would have wanted to take justice into his own hands? Cases that only occur when there is no justice when the guilty of an unworthy act is not punished, and in this case, they killed a man who was expected by the electric chair. In fact, they murdered a dead person. That's what that gangster did.

How could he make anyone believe that he acted for emotional reasons? Possibly we've never seen greater scandal! Possibly the worst gangsters never even acted more crudely, more awkwardly, more outrageously!

This shows that those responsible for Kennedy's death needed, they were urged to remove the accused at all costs. They were imperiously urged for some reason, possibly for him not to speak; they were urged to eliminate him and safely removed him.

Once the alleged murderer was eliminated, police and judicial authorities of Dallas declared the case closed, as if it had been not the President of the United States but a dog murdered on the street, and declared the case closed in 48 hours. They closed the case when the case was becoming less closable, when the case was becoming more mysterious, when the case was becoming more suspicious, when the case was becoming more investigable from the judicial and penal point of view. I am sure that no judge acting as such, would objectively close any case in circumstances such as this, in which the main accused is killed.

Of course we carefully read the reports where the news about the second murder was consigned, and especially those of the UPI. Immediately the same emphasis the IPU had placed to present Oswald as a communist follower, as a Castro-communist, as an admirer of Castro, they placed it to present this gentleman, Jack Ruby, as an admirer of Kennedy, a great admirer of Kennedy.

That is the first thing the UPI does — what it sets out to do immediately — It is to release the version that interested it: trying to present a case of murder by emotion, sentimentality, for patriotism. A disservice the UPI can create to whom was president of its country, presenting this gangster, this gambler, this immoral and vicious subject as a great admirer of Kennedy, as an extraordinary admirer who was willing to face the electric chair to avenge his death. An individual who in his life did nothing but exploit vice, gambling and immorality.

Why come now with these incredibly moral outbursts in a depraved, degenerated individual? Why come now with these altruistic feelings? And the UPI in its first reports tried to give that impression. They questioned the sister and she said she could not sleep since the assassination of the President. That is, they interrogated this man's sister, Rubby, to develop the theory that he did it for emotional and sentimental reasons. The UPI did not hesitate to foist such admirer to the assassinated US president.

What unscrupulousness, what dishonesty, what a scandal! The same emphasis they put on presenting the other one as an admirer of Castro, they placed immediately on presenting this one as an admirer of Kennedy. This is how imperialism works, this is how reaction works, this is how they prepare their campaigns and their lies. But it seems that this made them shoot themselves in the foot (APPLAUSE).

That's how other news arrive: "Physicians who attended the assassinated US president now report that they're not sure whether it was one or two bullets that ended his life, and cannot establish in which points the bullets entered and on which ones they exited."

Connally in an interview he gave to reporters from his hospital bed, among other things, he says: "What happened in Dallas was the hatred that exists in our society, the same hatred that manifested itself when a bomb was placed in the Birmingham church that killed five children." This says that the other wounded man who was accompanying Kennedy said.

And so it will be very difficult to continue dressing up this doll, it will be very difficult to continue holding their version in place. We even think it is difficult to believe there hasn't been enough reaction within the United States for this to remain uninvestigated. It is very difficult to conceive that not many Americans, whatever their political position, their ideology might be, that for an elementary sense of decency, shame and prestige, do not require for all these facts to be clarified, to find an explanation for all these strange circumstances. It will be very difficult, and only at an extraordinary cost of prestige for the United States, for them to cover up the perpetrators of the murder, they can keep in secret and in mystery the motif and real purpose, and the masterminds, the organizers of that crime.

But they themselves, the same who forged these plans against peace, against Cuba, against the Soviet Union, against humanity, against progressive or even liberal sectors of the US were the culprits. It is very difficult to keep the secret and mystery to the end.

So that's why, we'll wait hopefully quiet but not confident. Not confident, because, see what dangers threaten humanity, what dangers threaten people! How ruthlessness, how much evil and cynicism are enclosed in the imperialist society, among the most reactionary elements of that society! How many dangers, how sinister their plans are! That's why I said hopefully to wait quiet but not confident, because it is one more teaching, it is a lesson. Meanwhile, let's see how those who organized all this maneuver get cooked in their own sauce, because even the shooting Olympic champions are telling their views anywhere in the world.

Anyway our country, which was again threatened, that saw itself threatened again, that saw how the weapons of aggression were pointing back at it, which saw how tried they tried to throw over it and its Revolution a shower of infamy, has seen once again how everything is exposed, how it is once again demonstrated the behavior of each country, the procedure of each country. To this test, as well as to all the trials to which our revolution is subjected to, our revolution emerges with more reason and turns out more moral, because in the eyes of the world it is clear, and will be increasingly so, how the reactionary from the US wanted to make our country and the world victims of their criminal designs, even at the cost of killing the president itself of that country.

This whole episode sounds more like an FBI novel, to a gangster episode than to a political event. All the circumstances, the scandalous way in which the two murders took place remind us of those gangster films we've seen many times here, filmed precisely in Hollywood, because the whole thing is extremely similar, the person in charge of murdering or eliminating the defendant was nothing less than a gambler from Chicago.

How will they be able to explain these things to the world? How will they be able to defend that impudence to humanity, those who have acted with such lack of respect for the views of the world, who have shown such a lack of human sensitivity?

This concludes the reference that we necessarily had to point out to clarify aspects in relation to the facts....